

Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality
Behavioral Health Committee Meeting
November 16, 2010
Independent Resources, Inc.
Wilmington, DE
1:00 pm

Present: Christy Hennessey (Chair); Lois Steele (Vice-Chair); Karen Miller, Deaf Ministries; Della Thomas, DSD; Joshua Weinstein, MCC; Jo Singles, Staff Support.

Interpreter: Pamela D'Occhio

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

- Results of the Mental Health Survey for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Population

Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the September 21, 2010 meeting as submitted.

Chair Report

Deferred to Business.

Business:

Delaware Psychiatric Center Interpreter Policy

Christy referred to the handout from DPC and spoke about the revised policy that was sent from DSAMH, saying that it was called Speech & Hearing Rehabilitation. Christy stated that none of the Committee's proposed revisions (handout) that had been previously submitted were included. Lois commented that the new DPC policy is geared more to people who go into the hospital and have lost the ability to speak and/or hear and is not related to deaf and interpreter services. Christy will contact Steve Dettwyler or Gail directly about setting up a meeting to discuss this. Christy spoke about mental health services in Alabama and referred to a handout distributed. Christy will send a copy of Alabama's policy model to Steve as a comparison. Christy added that there really needs to be a discussion on the policy and suggested that they attend the next Committee meeting. Lois suggested offering to meet on a different date according to their schedules. This was agreed to by everyone.

Department of Corrections (DOC) Interpreter Policy

Christy gave an update on DOC Interpreter Policy and explained that she had contact with the DLP (Disabilities Law Program) and they are filing a complaint against DOC since DOC had not responded to their request for information since June. Christy stated that once information is received, this Committee will develop a similar policy to the DPC policy. Christy added that she heard that Maryland DOC have video-phones. Josh suggested recommending the use of video-

phones with the variety of sign languages and commented that TTY phones are not adequate as any noise scrambles the language, which is a very frustrating process. Further discussion on this will be tabled for another time.

February 7th Behavioral Health Fair Planning

Christy announced that Marcia Schweitzer will be co-presenting at this event with an expert who works with the deaf and hard of hearing. The presentation will take about one hour or so, with Marcia speaking about her experiences with deaf and hard of hearing clients and will show a PowerPoint presentation. Josh and Christine are working on possible sponsors for the continental breakfast. Josh commented that he will be contacting Christine to work out the rest of the details. The event will begin at 9 am, with presentations at 10 am. Christy added that there will be networking time and she is hoping for 5-8 exhibitors. The discussion continued about set-up for approximately 30 people with the following equipment needed: PowerPoint equipment, sound system with microphone. Christy said that Loretta was developing a flyer (with a separate note for exhibitors) for distribution in December. A decision was made not to charge for this first event and hopefully gain interest for future events. This will allow nonprofit, State and interpreting agencies to set up at no cost. A decision was made to have the presentation and exhibits in the cafeteria, where there is also a stage. Christy offered to have the Committee help with cleanup if needed. Lois suggested that, when distributing the flyer to potential exhibitors, ask them if they know of someone in the mental health field who would be interested in participating, which would broaden the list for future events. Josh suggested putting a contact name and number on the flyer for additional information regarding exhibits and also suggested sending the flyer to as many groups as possible (using different contact lists). Della suggested not putting DSD on the flyer, but say Statewide Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing & Deaf Blind, using the DSD address.

There was much discussion regarding the title for the event. Agreement was made to title the event: **Starting at Square One: Piecing Together the Mental Health Quilt in Delaware**, and using a graphic of a quilt. Christy will inform Marcia and Loretta on this and will also look for possible graphics. After Loretta develops a flyer, it will be sent to the Committee for approval by Christmas. The event will be from 9 am – 12:00 pm. Della offered to get a tray of sandwiches for 30 people. Josh recommended putting on the flyer that morning refreshments will be provided and adding that sandwiches will be provided (if that is confirmed before the flyer is distributed). Suggestion was also made to contact Tracy Holmes who may be willing to provide food. Kyle could provide contacts of legislators who may be interested. Suggestion was made to invite Kevin Huckshorn. Christy will introduce the presenters. While there was discussion about offering CEUs, a decision was made not to offer this at this time. There was some discussion about inclement weather and the event needs to be postponed. A decision was decided to reschedule to an evening in March if needed.

Results of the Mental Health Survey for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Population

Christy thanked Jo for tabulating the results of the survey. There was particular discussion about the last question on the survey and concern was expressed for Social Services not providing interpreters or refusing to provide an interpreter when requested. Christy asked if this group should make contact with Social Services, speaking with the Coordinators or developing a memo policy and educating them on access. Karen suggested that Social Services should contact

clients through video phone, but comment was made that these clients probably would not have video phones. Christy stated that 26 surveys were filled out. Karen spoke about difficulties in Dover in having interpreters at the hospital and staff needing to be re-educated on how to handle situations when an interpreter is needed (when new staff come on board). Comment was made that a VRI (Video Relay Interpreting) system is cheaper than having a live interpreter. Suggestion was made to make contact with the Dover hospital to streamline the process of deaf and hard of hearing people having access to interpreting services. Christy commented that five years ago, she and Loretta gave a deaf sensitivity training to hospitals in Dover and Lewes for approximately 50 people. Josh commented that it might be helpful to provide ongoing trainings, but a memo or policy should be circulated by the hospital where a policy is in place, can be accessed and followed.

There was some discussion if CODHHE or this group should handle. A decision was made for this Committee to handle these, with CODHHE providing support. Josh recommended setting up a standardized policy that would be sent to all facilities, rather than deal with one facility at a time. Della commented about the United Nations acceptance of ASL and suggested a higher Division could set the policy and then it can be enforced. Della spoke about using the term mode of communication and added that for some people ASL is their native language, not English. Della stated that, when speaking about SEE1 and SEE2 (Sign Exact English) and mode of communication encompasses everything when describing ASL. Christy stated the results of the survey confirm that we need a standardized policy, even if it is one for all of DHSS. This will be tabled until after the workshop in February.

The meeting ended at 2:30 pm.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 18, 2010 at 1:00 pm at IRI in Wilmington. There will be continued email communication before the January meeting regarding the Behavioral Health Fair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jo Singles
Administrative Specialist
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